Harambee FLAME

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WHAT FOLKS THINK

(The following is an interview with A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon, a Brother in Omaha who has written several articles about and is otherwise active with respect to the issue of education.)

Editor: A'Jamal, I have read your articles in the OMAHA STAR and have a good idea of what you think on major issues, particularly education. I would be interested, as would the FLAME readership, in your background and present activities.

A'Jamal: I was born in Hastings, Nebraska in 1955. However, I was raised in Omaha. Graduated from U.N.L. in 1976 and joined the Peace Corps in 1977. I was posted to Botswana, working in rural areas. I had a chance to travel throughout South Africa during my tenure in the Peace Corps and felt right at home just as in the good old U.S.A. Presently I am completing a Specialist Degree in education(30 hours past the Masters) and am currently trying to change the White-Brainwashing curriculum in the Omaha Public Schools.

Editor: Brother, you have been very critical of the U.S. public school system. What are your major criticisms?

A'Jamal: The schools fail to produce and educate Blacks so that they can move into positions of power and prestige. We Blacks, and other minorities as well, allow them exclusive control over development of training for the professional fields--the legal profession, medicine, science, etc. The schools in the U.S.A. are, to a large extent, basketball and football factories for Blacks. To put it simply, the schools destroy our people intellectually and politically.

Editor: What are your views on busing? Have you been able to uncover any evidence that this mechanism has had any important impact on academic achievement or ethnic self-esteem on the part of American-born African students?

A'Jamal: We can't read on a bus. The only thing busing does is give us a ride to the white part of town. A great deal of the research I have seen fails to justify busing. It only offers more opportunities for whites to get rich. They sell the buses, gas, and spare parts. We can't even get jobs driving our people.

Editor: If the public school system is not functioning in the interests of African people in the U.S., as you have stated in several articles, what can we do to establish an educational system that will function in our interests?

A'Jamal: I sincerely feel that we are too poor economically to establish our schools at this time. We are consistently overtaxed. We should put pressure on the present system to stop them from teaching lies to our children. We should put Blacks in positions of educational leadership and not allow them to sell our souls for pieces of silver.

Editor: You speak a great deal about "brainwashing" with respect to the public school system. We know, of course, that there are other forces in this society which have been pointed to as "brain-washing" agents. In the past few months, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization has conducted several programs on the question of whether xtianity has had a predominantly positive or negative role in the struggle of African people(in the U.S.) to obtain liberation. Would you care to comment?

A'Jamal: I would question the role of religion in regards its impact on Black unity (centered around our true culture). Many Africans have traditionally believed that religion is an individual thing and to make a dichotomy between Christianity and Islam is to fall into a game. Hitler was a Christian, as is Reagan. Do I want to consider myself as being a part of that gang? Of course not.

I believe there is someone who is greater than I am, but that is as far as I would care to go in defining that "someone." Weak people always need something to hold them together and I guess traditional religion keeps us weak and in need of being held together. More sins are committed by the church, and in its name, than we care to admit. Religious racism is deadly, I know! South Africa has more churches per 1,000 people than most countries.

The empirical question each one of us should ask is how much have we done for Black culture or people in the past year. The Jews left the N.A.A.C.P. because they were moving too fast and didn't want to be on the "goods" train. They always travel on the "mail" train.

Editor: Thank you, A'Jamal, for taking the time to answer our questions and doing your part to educate the readers of the FLAME.

H.A.C.O. ANNUAL BANQUET

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization annual banquet will be held on June 19th. We should be able to finalize plans for the banquet in the next couple of weeks and will then send out notices. Pass the word about the banquet around. Help us pack the "house."

H.A.CO. TO HOLD ELECTIONS

On May 19th., Malcolm's birthday, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will hold elections. The officers to be elected are chairman and sgt.-at-arms. The other positions on the executive board will be filled by appointment.

FROM OTHER SOURCES ...

will not be seen at this time so that we may bring you this piece on Malcolm X, which we just received from Corbin Seavers of Berea, Kentucky.

MALCOLM X: WHERE HE STOOD

May 19th. and February 21st., respectively, mark the birth and death dates of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, better known as Malcolm X. Even though he has politically influenced many of the nation's leading contemporary Black scholars, including Dr. Manning Marable, James Boggs and Robert L. Allen. Malcolm X is undoubtedly one of the most misunderstood revolutionaires in African-American history. This is so despite the fact, as Alphonso Pinkney remarks in his book, Red, Black And Green: Black Nationalism in the United States, "his speeches and writings were models of clarity."

The myths and lies about Malcolm X, started by misguided individuals, still float about with an air of authenticity. Too many Blacks accept characterizations of Malcolm X like that of Carl T. Rowans, which portrays him as "a negro who preached segregation and race hatred." Critics of Malcolm X also accused him of advocating violence. There is no evidence, however, to substantiate such accusations. Throughout his public life, Malcolm rejected racism, segregation and violence.

Charges about Malcolm X being violent are largely based upon his critical remarks about the non-violent, direct-action campaign in the South, primarily influenced by Dr. King. In this writers opinion, Malcolm X criticized the non-violent, direct-action campaign because he misunderstood the philosophy behind the movement there. He confused non-violence as a tactic with that non-violence which is a way of life. The following quote by Dr. King explains.

> "Certainly it would be wrong and even disastrous to demand principled agreement on non-violence as a precondition to non-violent action...What is required is the spiritual determination of the people to be true to the principle as it works in this specific action."

Additionally, Malcolm X mistakenly saw non-violence and self-defense as necessarily mutually exclusive, as the following quote indicates.

> "...I don't believe sending them(Black and White students) in(the South) and telling them to be non-violent was intelligent. I go along with the effort toward registration, but I think they should be permitted to use whatever means at their disposal to defend themselves from the attacks of the Klan, White Citizens Council and other

RECENT PROGRAMS

At each Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization meeting, we have an eductional program. We try as much as possible to enlist the help of African people from outside the prison in functioning as resource persons.

Last Monday we had the benefit of the insights and information of Yusuf Jibo of the African Students Association. The Brother, who is from Nigeria, is studying at U.N.L. for a master's degree in journalism. He gave a very interesting presentation in which he told us of his background, talked about the aims of the African Students Association, and described for us some of the means by which African people were snatched away into slavery.

On the previous Monday, Brother Daniel Boamah-Wiafe of the U.N.O. Black Studies Department used the scheduled topic, "African Elected Officials," to zero in on the importance of developing qualities of leadership. In doing so, he cited both Africans born and residing in this country and those born and residing in Africa in order to illustrate for us the the benefits that come to a people who have effective leaders and the detriments that come to a people when they have ineffective leaders. Additionally, he spoke of the accomplishments and failures of Marcus Garvey.

Our membership and guests gained considerable knowledge from these programs and can and will gain more in the future. We want all of you who think you have knowledge to share to assist in this process by participating in our programs.

--the editor

MALCOLM X(cont.)

groups."

Possibly without realizing it, Malcolm expressed support for a non-violent tactic, i.e. registration, but failed to grasp a keener understanding of non-violent, direct-action philosophy and tactics. "The question was not whether one should use his gun when his home was attacked, but whether it was tactically wise to use a gun while participating in an organized demonstration," explained Dr. King in his book, Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?

Again, this is just speculation as to whether Malcolm X thoroughly understood non-violent tactics, philosophy, or the distinction between the two. There is, however, no doubt that he unequivocally disagreed with King and other leaders on how to deal with the violence of racism. "We are all against racism. The only difference between you and me is that you want to fight racism and racists non-violently and lovingly and I'll fight them the way they fight me. Whatever weapon they use, that's the one I'll use."

As we can clearly see, Malcolm X favored self-defense but never called for the initiation of violence. He spoke of violence as a tool to be used when the law would not provide protection and when there was no other tool available.

Much more could be written of the subject of Malcolm and his views on violence, but it is vitally important to re-emphasize two basic points. First of all, contrary to popular myth, Malcolm X clearly opposed wanton violence and only advocated self-defense. Secondly, he criticized the civil rights movements non-violent approach because he emphasized self-defense and possibly misunderstood the tactical reasoning underlying non-violent, direct-action philosophy. He simply believed in using the kind of language(literal or figurative) that racists understood.

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(Part II of this article will be presented in the June issue of the FLAME.)

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization is comprised of African(U.S.-born) men doing time at the Nebraska State Penitentiary. You who live on the outside have a stake in the results of our efforts to strengthen the level of respect these Brothers have for fellow African people and for themselves. We meet every Monday. We encourage you to work with us.

-the editor

"You reap what you sow."

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TRIPPING--I'VE HAD ENOUGH

Getting down, There's a party in motion
Everybody's on the scene
I can hear the sound
Like the roar of the ocean
As it flashes through the screen

Live it up--Don't you hear people screaming?
Hell, got to do it all the way
Until they burn it up in the lights that are gleaming
But a price you will have to pay

Why do we feel
we have to feed the fire?
We are only caught up
in our own desires.

I've had enough--It's much too tough to keep it up
I am calling out to you to lift us up
The world is so rough and I'm so tired
I've had enough.

Spinning around --- in perpetual motion
Like the coursed of our dreams
And moving in the crowds there's a hint of a notion
that you never will be seen

So down-feeling emotion
Nothing in between
Seeking that higher ground
full of faith and devotion
Tripping on the winning team.

Are these REASONS
that we feed the fire
Or are we just tripping
on our own desires

I am calling out to you to lift us up
Because the world is rough
It's much too tough to keep it up
and I
have had enough.

-Alan Hardin

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